

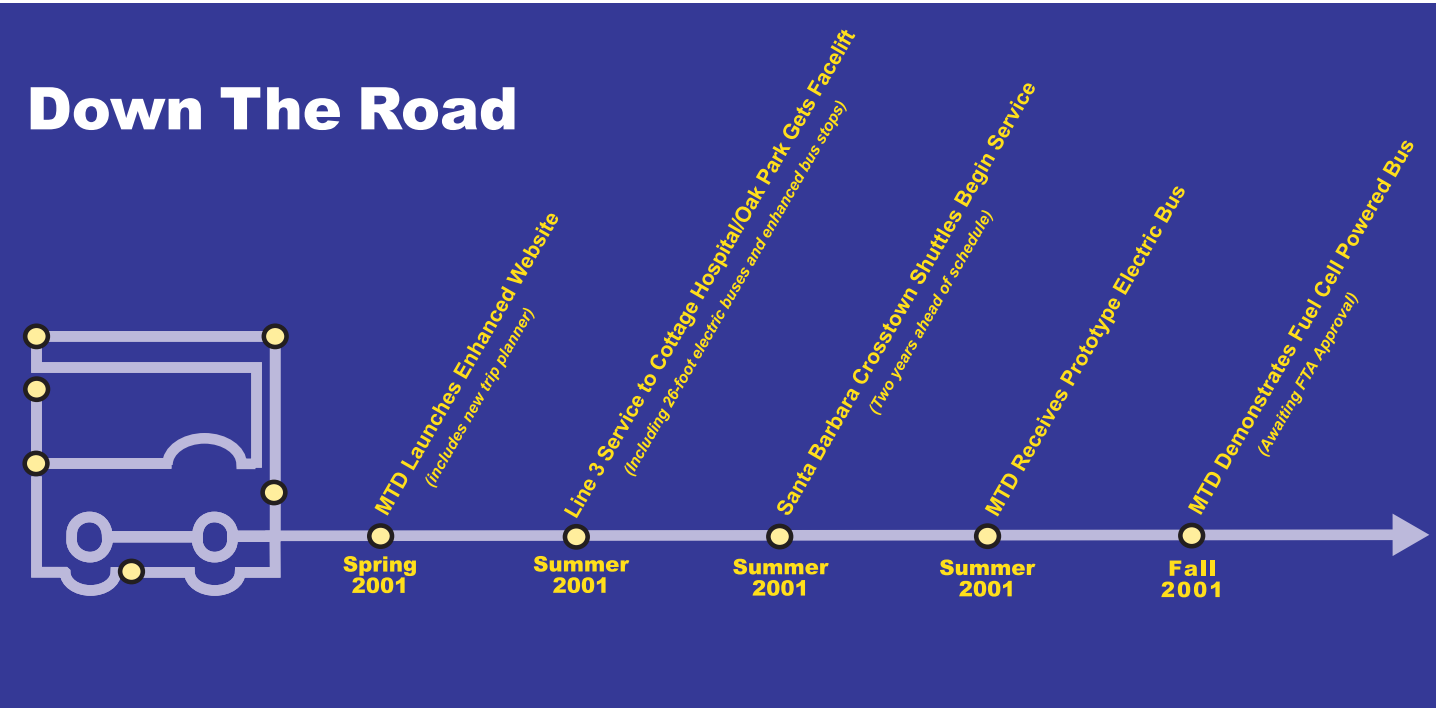
Rolling On

On October 1st, MTD introduced the much anticipated, fully electric, *Seaside Shuttles* to the City of Carpinteria. Ridership is already exceeding projections after just a few months of service. In the month of November, the shuttles carried a total of 6,432 passengers, up 3% from October.

“Think how many cars the shuttles take off the roadways.”

- Dick Weinberg, City Councilmember
City of Carpinteria.

The *Seaside Shuttles* are so popular, carrying about 200 passengers each day, that in November MTD doubled up service during the popular weekday morning and afternoon peak travel times while also providing service 90 minutes earlier on weekends. Everyone seems to be riding the shuttles, from students to workers to shoppers to even birthday party goers who can be seen celebrating from the shuttles on occasion. Local highschool cheerleaders have even taken up riding the shuttles on game nights in a sort of “mobile pep rally”. The *Seaside Shuttles* are truly a member of the community.



Transitworks! is a newsletter published by the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District



The Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District
550 Olive Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

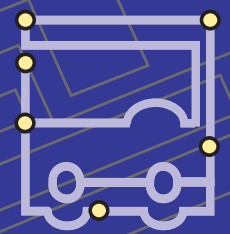
ISSUE 3 • JANUARY 2001

NEWSLETTER OF THE SANTA BARBARA

METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DISTRICT

Transitworks!

CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY



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Voices In The Crowd

Editor's Note: Voices in the Crowd is devoted to guest articles on key transportation issues. City Councilmember Gregg Hart is our first guest author and is responding to our question, “What is your vision of circulation in the downtown area?”

If you commute to work downtown you know Santa Barbara’s freeway and the crosstown intersections of Mission, Carrillo, Castillo and Garden are all heavily congested with morning and evening rush hour traffic. This problem promises to get worse if we don’t offer downtown employees a better way to get to work.

The old way to fix this problem was to widen roads and intersections. Thankfully, Santa Barbara has largely resisted this approach and by choosing a different path has preserved the human scale and special intimacy of our historic downtown.

The uniquely built environment that generations of Santa Barbarans have worked to create is a magnet for new development that promises to enhance our community’s artistic and cultural diversity and create the kind of jobs that allow our children to afford to live in their hometown. Technology companies want to bring high wage, low impact employment downtown. Plans to renovate the Arlington and Granada theatres creating a Performing Arts Center complex for the next century are underway. Unfortunately, both of these opportunities could founder on community traffic regulations if we don’t invest in public transit solutions that can shift commuters from cars to buses.

MTD is working closely with the City of Santa Barbara to create new transportation choices for downtown employees to solve this problem. In the next few years residents of the east and westside will be able to walk a block or so from their homes and catch electric shuttle buses that come by every seven and a half minutes for a quick ride downtown. This new “Electric Avenue” shuttle service is the first part of a larger strategy to make sure downtown commuters have a variety of choices available to get to work without a car.

With the unprecedented success of the Downtown Electric Shuttle as a guide, MTD’s “Electric Avenue” can be the kind of twenty first century transportation investment that enables Santa Barbara to preserve our natural and built environment, nurture our strong artistic tradition and welcome sustainable business. See you at the bus stop.

“In the next few years residents of the east and westside will be able to walk a block or so from their homes and catch electric shuttle buses that come by every seven and a half minutes for a quick ride downtown.”

- Gregg Hart, City Councilmember
City of Santa Barbara,

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All Around The Town

All Around The Town

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Public transportation took a major step forward when the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) approved MTD's South Coast Transit Plan (SCTP). Written as a *transit* plan to accommodate local *community* plans, the SCTP represents a collaboration of MTD with the cities of Carpinteria and Santa Barbara and the County of Santa Barbara for flexible Congestion Management and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds. By approving the SCTP, local leaders showed a determination to lead Santa Barbara into a more effective way of connecting people and their activities.

The SCTP has five major tasks: (1) replace 20 old diesel buses with electric buses, (2) implement five new bus routes, (3) purchase 19 new electric buses for those new routes, (4) revise downtown Santa Barbara bus routes to interface along corridors defined by enhanced bus stops, and (5) replace all of MTD's fareboxes.

Following the SBCAG approval, the City of Santa Barbara has further stepped-up community planning to include additional improvements to public transportation. City committees and the Council earmarked parking revenue to transit for an early implementation of the Crosstown Electric Shuttle (a SCTP route), next July. The City of Santa Barbara is also underwriting the cost to MTD of a more focused planning of public transit for downtown.

The Electric Avenue and Downtown Circulation Corridor projects are the focus of that planning effort. Both have been promoted as a means of making MTD more attractive and help to reduce the backwash of cars: pollution, traffic and parking lots. The projects must complement the ambiance of downtown too. CalTrans recently stepped-in to assist in the project with passenger communications systems. The program should be off the drawing board and ready for construction in about a year. The City has also increased the Downtown Waterfront Electric Shuttle service another 20%. It remains an example of new ways to deliver public transit and remains the backbone of Santa Barbara's leadership in innovative public transit.

MTD took delivery of new and much improved electric shuttles for the new Carpinteria Seaside Shuttle (another SCTP route). The shuttles were placed in service in October and have already exceeded ridership expectations. Additional service has been implemented with even more expected as Carpinterians embrace the new service.



The successful Seaside Electric Shuttle follows several past attempts by MTD to start local service in Carpinteria using diesel buses. MTD is employing the new "tools-of-the-trade" this time and seeing immediate results.

New commuter buses will be dispatched on the ever growing Line 20 Carpinteria Express between Santa Barbara and Carpinteria, the new Seaside Electric Shuttle, for a quarter, is already successful, a revitalized Carpinteria Avenue is pulling various modes together and a supportive community is prompting even better transit plans for our neighbor to the south.

MTD installed new fareboxes in November. They are currently being tested and going through a shakedown prior to full use of their features. While security is tantamount, these fareboxes will provide MTD with a better means of tracking ridership trends and enable MTD to target people, places and times for specific improvements and promotions.

Far and away the greatest challenge, as well as cost, of the SCTP is the acquisition of 20 electric replacement buses and 19 new service buses for five new routes. MTD is completing the federal grant process while its associates have been busy preparing the design of the next generation of electric transit buses.



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No community has the electric vehicle experience like Santa Barbara. Since Santa Barbara delivered the Lunar Land Rover to NASA in the '60's, its engineering talent has been continually busy. With that skill and leadership, over a million electric bus miles of operating experience, and new products destined for a Santa Barbara debut, the engineering of 21st Century transit vehicles is well under way.



Making the next generation of electric buses is exciting. A practical reality dictates that a concept be practical for crowds that need to get where they are going, safely and reliably. Even though electric buses have proven to be much more popular than their fossil-fuel brethren, they have to be reasonably price competitive and deliver their air quality benefit too. The engineering must be correct and a substantive marketplace must emerge to assure an investment in profitable production facilities.

A prototype drive system has been completed and it is currently being integrated into vehicles.

Santa Barbara's transit bus will seek to assume the winning aesthetics of the Downtown Waterfront Electric Shuttle while incorporating the common engineering repetitive in a typically produced transit bus. To meet the reliability and economic standards of the transit industry, serviceable electric drive system components must be integrated onto a sturdy chassis and be amenable to standard coach manufacturing processes.

MTD is accomplishing these goals with a proven motor drive and system electronics powered by batteries that have more energy. The first application in North America of this battery will provide the highest level of crashworthiness and operational safety while enabling a rapid recharge equal to a mile per each minute of charge time. The ultimate cost of the battery configuration will depend on the recharge time. A major objective in this project will be to determine whether to carry enough battery to service a full day on a bus route or reduce the battery and recharge it during the day, to service a full day on a bus route.

MTD will learn a lot from a proof-of-concept prototype vehicle modified and equipped with this drive system and have a battery configured for in-service recharge. The transit prototype will instead be configured with enough for a full day of electric operation. The decision for battery size in the production bus will follow an evaluation of reliability, cost and convenience.

The new electric bus is also amenable to hybridization. The vehicle control system lends itself to adding an on-board generator, a major market consideration given the more complex needs of large urban areas in hot and cold climates.

The transit prototype is due this August. The propulsion system will be available to any bus manufacturer and it is MTD's intent to solicit quotes for 39 electric buses from proven bus manufacturers that can supply electric buses that meet the performance standards proven by this system. With California and national heavy-duty vehicle emission regulations nearly ruling-out a diesel option in the future (*see Wheels On The Bus below*), the future in electric will soon appear in Santa Barbara.

The Wheels On The Bus

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has adopted new emissions rules for urban transit buses that require the MTD Board of Directors to choose between diesel and alternative fuel paths by January 31, 2001. The Board will discuss this topic and choose a path for MTD at their upcoming January 16th Board meeting. All comments from the public are welcome at that time.

Choosing the alternative-fuel path would require that 85% of MTD's new bus purchases be alternatively fueled but would allow MTD a two-year delay in retrofitting its existing diesel buses with emissions reduction devices. Choosing the diesel-fuel path would require that MTD retrofit its pre-1990 diesel engines with emissions control devices by January 2003. Newer diesel engines will have to be retrofitted by 2007. Beginning in 2002, MTD will replace twenty 1986 diesel Villagers with 20 of the 39 new electrics. The twenty 1984 Gillig Diesels should be replaced by their 20-year anniversary, requiring action beginning in 2002.

The new rules require MTD and other urban transit systems to begin using low-sulfur fuel by July 2002. The low-sulfur fuel will allow catalytic converters and exhaust particulate traps to function on diesel engines.

The Air Resources Board has also adopted a new rule limiting transit bus fleet emissions of nitrous oxides (NOx), a smog producing pollutant. CARB requires transit fleet operators to meet the new NOx rule by October 2002. MTD's combined diesel and electric fleet already meets CARB's NOx emissions limits. Electric buses produce no local emissions.